



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 771 Vienna, 19 November 2014

#### **EU Statement on Russian Unusual Military Activities**

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The European Union and its Member States remain deeply concerned about the continuing intensification of the fighting in some parts of Eastern Ukraine following the illegal and illegitimate so called elections held in these areas on 2 November. The Russian-backed separatists continue to destabilise the situation by further attempts to consolidate control and gain strategic advantages in grave violation of the ceasefire and the Minsk Agreements.

In particular, we are alarmed by recent heavy shelling, resulting in numerous civilian casualties, and by reports about convoys moving in the separatists held areas with substantial amounts of heavy weapons, tanks and troops without insignia from across the Russian border. We are equally worried by OSCE Observer Mission reporting of the highest number, since the beginning of its mandate, of persons in military-style dress crossing the border in both directions.

Against this background, we want to state that the European Union continues to believe that there can only be a political solution of the crisis. It is therefore imperative to avoid any further escalation of hostilities. All parties must now show utmost restraint, implement fully and without further delay their commitments under the Minsk Protocol and Memorandum, and reengage in view of finding a peaceful sustainable solution based on respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We once again underline the Russian Federation's responsibility in this context. The Russian Federation should use all its influence on the separatists to ensure the implementation of the Minsk Agreements, stop the inflow of weapons, military and fighters from its territory into Ukraine as well as withdraw those already present in the Donbass region.

In the same vein, we recall that security concerns such as those stemming from reports that the Russian Federation maintains a significant military presence at the border with Ukraine still need to be properly addressed, including by the existing OSCE politico-military instruments and mechanisms. All of these, the Vienna Document in particular, should be used fully and in good faith in order to enhance military transparency and help promote a peaceful solution to the crisis.

We strongly condemn any impediment to the SMM monitoring activities and recall that the SMM monitors must have safe and free access to fulfil their mandate and tasks under the Minsk Agreements throughout Ukraine. We note in this respect that the OSCE UAV operations have been suspended following the electronic jamming of their navigational systems by Russian-backed separatists on 3 November. We reiterate therefore our call on all parties to provide secure conditions for the free operation of SMM UAVs in all parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, including along the border with the Russian Federation.

We are following with great concern the humanitarian impact of the crisis in and around Ukraine and the rising number of affected persons. The European Union calls on all parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law and principles to protect civilian population and infrastructures from fighting and to facilitate the work of international humanitarian organisations. The humanitarian impact of the conflict on the civilian population should not be exploited for military or political ends. Assistance should be delivered through the appropriate channels in agreement with the Ukrainian authorities.

We note in this context that yet another unauthorised convoy bearing the inscription “Humanitarian help from the Russian Federation” has been dispatched on 16 November by the Russian Federation to Eastern Ukraine and are of the opinion that once again fundamental international humanitarian law principles have not been observed in this regard. This way of proceeding constitutes also a breach of Ukrainian territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The European Union reiterates its strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation and will not recognise it. The European Union stands firm in upholding Ukraine's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and calls upon the Russian Federation to do likewise.

The candidate countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO and ALBANIA, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.